

**Step Up For Students
March Student Spotlight:**



**Luis Aponte Jr.
Liberty Christian Academy
Tavares, FL**

Luis Aponte Jr., an eighth-grader at Liberty Christian Academy in Tavares (just north of Orlando), has been on the Step Up For Students Scholarship Program since he was in the fourth grade. A good student from the start, the scholarship program has given him the opportunity to reach his full potential academically and develop into a well-rounded individual with aspirations for the future.

The son of Luis Aponte Sr. and Carmen Mendoza, Luis is the middle child of three children, including a younger brother who is also on the scholarship program. Luis attended public school until he was in third grade when his parents learned about the Step Up For Students Scholarships offered by Children First Florida. Luis' parents saw this as an opportunity to put him in a private school that would provide both a safe and challenging learning environment – something they did not feel he was receiving in the public school system. Luis' father knew from his own experiences in life that not all schools can fulfill the needs of each child, and he was eager to give his son the opportunity to achieve his dreams.

After receiving a scholarship from Children First Florida, Luis began attending Blue Lake Christian Academy in fourth grade. Luis' parents were pleased with the school they selected and it eased their minds knowing that he was in a safe and positive learning environment. Over the next few years, Luis excelled in the classroom with all A's and began to develop a keen interest in sports – especially basketball.

In the 2006-2007 school year, Luis transferred from Blue Lake Christian Academy to Liberty Christian Academy, where he still maintains straight A's and continually makes the honor roll. He enjoys the positive environment at Liberty Christian, where his teachers challenge him academically and encourage him to accomplish all of his goals. Not only does he shine academically, Luis also has become a star athlete on both the basketball and baseball teams. The skills he is developing both in and out of the classroom are helping to shape his future.

A mature 14-year-old, Luis already has his eye set on the future. He plans to attend college upon graduation from high school to pursue both academic studies and sports. He has not yet narrowed down his choices, but he hopes to pursue higher education at one of the following colleges: University of Florida, North Carolina, Duke or Kentucky. With his excellent grades and outstanding determination, Luis is bound to excel in whatever he pursues.

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Luis Aponte/2

Luis credits his positive experience in school to the opportunities Step Up For Students and its donors have given him, and the teachers at both Blue Lake Christian Academy and Liberty Christian Academy who have offered him challenging and caring environments that helped him grow into the well-rounded individual he is today.

About Liberty Christian Academy

A ministry of Liberty Baptist Church in Tavares, Liberty Christian Academy serves children in pre-school through 12th grade. The school uses the A Beka curriculum and administers the Stanford 10 Achievement Test each year. Liberty Christian currently serves 290 students, 45 of which are Step Up For Students Scholarship recipients. The annual cost of tuition at the school is \$3,200 per student. For more information, visit www.libertychristianacademy.com.

About the Step Up For Students Scholarship Recipients

The typical Step Up For Students scholarship family has an average income of \$23,000 for a family of four, and more than half of the scholarship families are single-parent homes. The typical scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. They are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future, look for viable options. Parents apply for Step Up For Students Scholarships so their children can attend the school best suited for their special needs, beliefs, and abilities, and to address negative trends in their child's learning skills and/or environment.

Step Up For Students Scholarships are funded by corporations that redirect up to 75 percent of their corporate state income tax liability to a qualified Scholarship Funding Organization in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. For more information or to learn how your corporation can participate in the program, visit www.StepUpForStudents.com, or call 1-800 782-9140 for more information.

